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*United States Marine Corps  
Command and Staff College  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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COMMANDING GENERATION Y: HOW GENERATION X MILITARY LEADERS CAN  
BETTER UTILIZE GENERATIONAL TENDENCIES

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

Major Justin P. Mokrovich, USAF  
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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Donald Bittner, Professor Emeritus Marine  
Corps University

Approved:

Date: 21 March 2013

Oral Defense Committee Member: Wayne Beyer, Lt Col, USMC

Approved:

Date: 21 MAR 13

Oral Defense Committee Member:

Approved:

Date: N/A

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## *Executive Summary*

**Title:** Commanding Generation Y: How Generation X Military Leaders Can Better Utilize Generational Tendencies

**Author:** Major Justin Mokrovich, United States Air Force

**Thesis:** Differentiating between multiple generational tendencies, how generations communicate differently, and the motivational drive behind each generation, enable commanders to better lead Generation Y within the U.S. military.

**Discussion:** Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y are three significant and distinct generations in the US work force today. Baby Boomers are handing over the reigns to Generation X at top leadership positions, and both generations are coming to grips leading Generation Y (those born after 1980). Moreover, leadership within the military, more specifically in command, is not immune to generational stereotypes and must maintain a professional tradition of arms while appreciating the nuances of Generation Y. *Commanding Generation Y* is a generational study as it pertains to military command.

The preponderance of commanders throughout the US military now average 33-45 years of age (Generation X) and the majority of their subordinates come from Generation Y. Baby Boomers consist of individuals born between 1946 and 1963 (67-50 years old), Generation X includes those born between 1965 and 1980 (48-33 years old), and Generation Y is defined as individuals born between 1981 and 2000 (32-13 years old). Baby Boomers are hard working employees that value company loyalty, communicate often, and encourage participation. Generation X is straightforward, prefer to work independently, and are often viewed as cynical. Generation Y is collaborative, polite to authority, comfortable with multitasking, and seeks continual feedback from superiors.

*Commanding Generation Y* is significant to those commanders who will lead Generation Y while bridging the hierarchy of a different generation. Although the profession of arms is a time-honored tradition steeped in discipline, and historic practices, the new generation of commanders must adapt to the conventions of Generation Y to be successful. The approach to *Commanding Generation Y* will identify key generational differences in behavior relating to military command. Answering questions as to the needs of Generation Y to increase productivity, how to clearly communicate the Commander's message, advanced practices of training and operating, and how to maintain unwavering military values to a new generation will be answered. Additionally, and as important, commanders must also understand how to bridge the generational gap to senior leaders. To be effective and lead successfully, Generation X commanders must appreciate generational differences and learn how to lead Generation Y while remaining loyal to senior leadership generational tendencies.

**Conclusion:** Successful Generation X leaders must appreciate and adapt to Generation Y differences while remaining loyal to senior leadership generational tendencies.

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## *Preface*

*Commanding generation Y* is my attempt at looking forward to take command of a U.S. Air Force squadron in which leadership plays the vital role in command. I hope this study benefits those in all stages of leadership within the military and across all services, not just those fortunate enough to be in command. I recognize command and leadership are very personal, so too is the following research that is filtered through my own personal leadership lens. Sister services and units vary in missions and traditions, thus different leadership attributes are required. My research, however, attempts to remain broad and general providing a leader with ideas to consider while commanding the current youngest generation entering the armed forces.

The scope of *Commanding Generation Y* is narrowed to provide relevant conclusions linked to specific practical applications. It is not a study on the validity of generational theory or debate of best military leadership practices. Rather, it is a study to develop conclusions based on already existing generational research to create applicable command military leadership skill-sets based on the advancement of societal norms and technology. Specifically, generational conclusions drawn are linked directly to how a commander can better lead. Conclusions may be applicable to different leadership levels throughout the military and within the corporate world; however, the scope of this research remains confined to military command applications.

You may disagree with points made throughout this paper, and that is good. The important point is the consideration of different opinions. If this research forces you to reflect on your own personal leadership and command attributes, then my work and your effort have been worthwhile endeavors. We owe our youngest generation of warriors our best effort improving ourselves first before expecting them to win our wars and protect our constitution.

Thank you to my mentor, Dr. Donald Bittner, and my mother-in-law, Mrs. Carol Trissell, who have turned my “rag-tag” ideas into coherent thoughts. Special thanks to my wife Nancy and boys, Nathan and Tyler, for inspiring me to always improve and never settle. Finally, thank you to the men and woman I have been fortunate enough to serve with over a fourteen-year Air Force career, who have always been honest and constructively critical to make me a better officer and citizen.

## **Introduction**

The United States (U.S.) dominant workforce in 2013 is comprised of three generations known as Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Although the U.S. military is less than 1% of the U.S. population, the services are a direct reflection of society and assume some of their traits. Recent scholarly generational studies focus on the soon to be retired Baby Boomers, the transition of Generation X to more senior levels of leadership positions, and the emergence of Generation Y into the workforce. These studies tend to observe common characteristics of each generation related to work ethics, values, and motivations. Moreover, many of these assessments hypothesize the differences of each generation; yet, they also discover all generations value almost identical qualities. The varied approaches of generational studies have led to unique conclusions relevant to the current workforce and can be of beneficial use to military leadership.

Within the U.S. armed forces, Generation X bridges the gap between Baby Boomers and Generation Y. The military hierarchy, based on rank and years of service, is organized as such that Generation Y reports to Generation X who in turn reports to Baby Boomers. Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz maintained that while the nature of warfare does not change the characteristics of warfare do.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, successful leadership qualities and practices maintain certain constants even though certain leadership characteristics adapt to changing societal trends and technological evolutions. Generation X military leaders fill a gap between a societal and technological divide linking Baby Boomers and Generation Y. Moreover, the preponderance of military leaders in command positions today fall into the Generation X demographic. To be effective and lead successfully, Generation X commanders must appreciate generational differences and learn how to effectively lead Generation Y while remaining loyal to senior leadership generational tendencies.

*Commanding Generation Y* is significant to those commanders who will lead Generation Y while bridging the gap to military senior leaders from the Baby Boomer generation. The preponderance of commanders throughout the U.S. military in 2013 average 33-45 years of age (Generation X) and the majority of subordinates come from Generation Y (below 33 years of age).<sup>2</sup> Although the profession of arms is a time-honored tradition steeped in hierarchy, discipline, and historic practices, the new generation of commanders must recognize the conventions of Generation Y to be successful.

*Commanding Generation Y* will identify key differences in the behavior and values of each generation. Published works from leading generational authors were used to define the differences and commonalities between various generations. Additionally, seven research dissertation studies selected either verified or contradicted generation theory. The knowledge formed from these dissertations developed suggested practical application towards commanding Generation Y and bridging the generational divide.

### **Research Problem Framing**

**Background and Problem.** Correct problem framing of *Commanding Generation Y* is a critical aspect to the research and understanding of presented concepts that link generational studies and leadership traits within the armed forces. To appreciate the conclusions found through research and study, it must be noted the methodology used, what each study “is”, and, more importantly, what each study “is not”. The ensuing discussion identifies the background and problem, significance and purpose of this paper, the theoretical framework and research method used, and the scope, assumptions, and limitations of research.

Generational studies formulate distinctions between age demographics that share common historical perspectives and life experiences. While individuality is not wholly

discounted, behavioral norms in human nature become apparent at separate stages throughout history. Stanton Smith, the National Director for next generational initiatives at Deloitte LLP, noted, “research has shown that a generation can be characterized by a certain set of attitudes and beliefs … even if not all in the group share the majority’s views.”<sup>3</sup> Generational studies identify behavioral norms and familiarities associated to generations within specific time frames. ValueOptions, the nation’s largest independent behavioral health care and wellness company, believes that “the social and economic influences that create popular culture are experienced by all within a generation, even though culture and gender play a role in how the experience is interpreted individually.”<sup>4</sup> Grouping together specific traits and defining a generational trend can facilitate identifiable linkages to better understand the actions of a demographic group throughout a lifespan.

Command hierarchy and leadership within the U.S. military is the lynchpin to how the U.S. armed forces operates, fights, and ensures the security of the nation. Although units and mission vary, specific attributes of leadership are constant to maintain discipline and mission focus within the operating environment. Leadership core values remain steadfast; however, overtime education and communication evolution create a shift in capability. The integration of race, ethnic groups, and gender throughout military history, for example, showcases advancements in societal thinking and understanding. Leaders had to adapt to the changing environment. Similarly, how leaders can communicate faster over a larger audience demonstrates the growth in reach of commanders to subordinates. Over time, generations also adapt and change in beliefs, values, and capabilities.<sup>5</sup> While core leadership attributes remain unchanged, the characteristics of the way a military leader commands also evolves. Moreover, Johann Riescher points out that leaders who “understand generational differences, work habits of

employees, and employee leader expectations will, theoretically, communicate well with all employees, increase employee retention, decrease generational conflicts, increase productivity, and create generational synergy. Additionally, an organization's success depends on the ability to recruit, retain, manage, and motivate employees from all generational cohorts.”<sup>6</sup> Command leadership is paramount to maintain military readiness and continue the growth of an institution charged with the security of the U.S.

**Significance and Purpose.** The dilemma linking generational studies to military leadership is the “so what” of the argument. A generational tendency within the military structure falls short in appreciating the relevance. Moreover, the armed forces in general are composed of personnel who share common values regardless of generational tendencies.<sup>7</sup> A direct link can, however, make use of generational norms to better command organizations whose personnel are from different military generations. Additionally, as Generation X attempts to bridge the gap between Baby Boomers and Generation Y, they too must also understand their own generational norms while being comfortable operating with personnel, junior and senior, who have different shared experiences and values.

The purpose of *Commanding Generation Y* is thus to study the diverse generational concepts so as to improve command leadership attributes within the U.S. military. Leadership studies will continue throughout the span of a military service member’s career, regardless of rank or position. Each U.S. service has developed levels of professional military education to coincide with rank and attendant level of responsibility. Within the officer corps, for example, leadership is the foundation of training and is continually developed to improve an officer’s ability to lead. The pinnacle in all the four armed services is the opportunity to command. While leadership is required regardless of rank or position, command holds both a legal and

moral place within the military. *Commanding Generation Y* provides commanders with practical skill-sets to better lead Generation Y subordinates while remaining loyal to senior level officers of the Baby Boomer generation. Its research and thesis conclusions are applicable to Field Grade Officers commanding airmen, soldiers, sailors, and Marines to further bridge generational tendencies and increase command effectiveness.

**Theoretical Framework and Research Method.** The theoretical framework of *Commanding Generation Y* is based on common acceptable generational theory and military leadership best practices. Research method includes studying generational Ph.D. dissertations, referencing books and articles written on generation studies, and investigating corporate practices with respect to generational theories to define common conclusions and results. The sources used for this research paper focus primarily on generational study literature and research to specifically answer the following questions:

- What is the common consensus of tendencies between each generation?
- What are the main areas of focus as a commander?
- What can commanders change to effectively lead Generation Y?
- How can a commander effectively bridge the generation gap between subordinates and the chain of command?

Furthermore, practical applications to Command Generation Y include:

- Effective Leadership/Communication,
- Effective Training (how does generation Y learn?),
- Instilling military values (generation gap), and
- Reaching the family...the military member's support structure

**Scope, Assumptions, and Limitations.** The Assumptions and limitations of *Commanding Generation Y* also contribute to limiting the scope of research while still maintaining relevant conclusions. Varying generational studies classify the exact age of each recognizable generation differently. Some studies also suggest that a four-year gap exists between each generation that blurs the line between tendencies. Additionally, although it is recognized that nuances exist between U.S. sister services, results are broad and pertain to all four services and at varying levels of leadership. *Commanding Generation Y* is not a new research study into generational differences or military leadership; rather, it is an educational link, or thought process, between the two areas to develop additional command leadership skill-sets through a generational lens.

### **Defining Generational Traits and Stereotypes**

*Commanding Generation Y* collected numerous doctoral research studies and corporate industry norms to define age demographics and stereotypes of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Although different research studies have coined the various generations by different names, they do not change the underlying themes. Additionally, the range of age in each demographic may vary slightly; however, this does not change the scope of this study.

*Commanding Generation Y* research defines each generation in the following demographic as of 2013:

Baby Boomers - A group of individuals born between 1946 and 1963 (67-50 years old)

Generation X - A group of individuals born between 1965 and 1980 (48-33 years old)

Generation Y - A group of individuals born between 1981 and 2000 (32-13 years old)

Baby Boomers are composed of senior general officers and senior enlisted members. Generation X are field grade officers and senior noncommissioned officer.<sup>8</sup> Generation Y are company grade officers, noncommissioned officers, and below.

Furthermore, prevailing trends in each demographic are succinctly defined by Paul Arsenault in *Validating Generational Differences: A Legitimate Diversity and Leadership Issue*:

Baby Boomers prefer a collegial and consensual style. Passionate and concerned about participation and spirit in the workplace. They espouse lots of communication, sharing of responsibility, and respect from each other's autonomy. Baby Boomers despise the traditional hierarchy and make every effort to turn the hierarch upside-down....

Generation X trend to be fair, competent and straightforward. Do not respect authority as did past generations as they prefer egalitarian relationship. Like to be challenged and thrive on change. Brutal honesty is a trademark of this generation....

Nexters [Generation Y] prefer a polite relationship with authority. Like leaders who pull people together. Believe in collective action and a will to get things changed.<sup>9</sup>

Paul Arsenault's conclusions highlight that Baby Boomers and Generation Y share more commonalities than Generation X. Generation X is more the outlier, but is responsible for following Baby Boomers while leading Generation Y in the military hierarchy.

Leading authors in generational studies further identify the key characteristics of each generation (see Appendix A: Generational Table Matrix). Strauss states that a generation is a “cohort-group whose length approximates the span of a phase of life and whose boundaries are fixed by peer personality.”<sup>10</sup> Once identified, the generational norms are associated to shared historical events in order to explain the reasoning behind identified commonalities. It is from this research that conclusions are drawn to explain why generations act the way they do. Identifying the characteristic of each generation and the reasoning behind observed norms further defines their values, work ethic, and motivation. The following generational traits come from Martha and Jill Crumpacker [2007] who concisely and accurately depicted each generation when compared to other leading author's ideas and explanations.

**Defining Baby Boomer Stereotypes.** The Baby Boomer Generation was the largest generational population in the U.S. at approximately 80 million until Generation Y slightly surpassed in numbers. Their dominant traits include tolerance, highlighted through civil rights and Vietnam protests of the 1960's, and propensity to question authority. "Boomers" are workaholics valuing the loyalty of a company and seeking reward through promotions, titles, and money as opposed to their previous generation (Veteran/Traditionalists), which appreciated recognition and the opportunity to mentor, are old-fashioned, domineering, and do not want to advance in new ways of thinking within the workforce.<sup>11</sup> Baby Boomers' loyalty translated into putting work before family needs, but that does not mean they do not value family. "Boomers" prefer to communicate face-to-face, thus making their communication style more personable. Coined as "team players", they prefer to collaborate on ideas within the workplace and are logical, efficient, and will do what it takes. Strauss and Howe add the "authentic generation" that recognizes generational boundaries and how they differ, but are not apologetic and are comfortable with their own identity.<sup>12</sup>

**Defining Generation X Stereotypes.** Generation X is the smallest generational population at approximately 48 million. Their dominant traits are enticement, self-direction, and pleasure seeking. In the workforce, Generation X is task-oriented, independent, and self-reliant. Literary scholars within the generational study field relate Generation X's independence to their upbringing of being "latch-key" children, meaning that throughout their lives most families had both parents at work and Generation X was left to become more self-supportive. They communicate very directly and as needed, only wanting to know how they are doing. Work and family life is better balanced in Generation X, with more priority given to family. Martha and Jill Crumpacker's theorized that throughout the 1980's the older concept of a career in one

company began to shift, hence while Baby Boomers were able to adapt Generation X learned that a career with the same employer would not be the norm. Generation X became less loyal to companies and placed more value on family. They are skeptical of authority and feel rewarded through autonomy and flexibility of work practices. Typical stereotypes of Generation X include cynical, lazy, and somewhat selfish.<sup>13</sup>

**Defining Generation Y Stereotypes.** Atkinson notes that Generation Y grew-up “in an era of wealth, more so than other generations, due in part to either having two working parents or couples waiting longer to have children”.<sup>14</sup> They are similar in number to Baby Boomers and have been the primary focus of generational studies within the workforce today as the older generation retires. Generation Y’s dominant traits are similar to Generation X; however, they are also more comfortable with multitasking, are group-oriented, and require an explanation as to “why” within the work force. Communication is predominantly through e-mail, instant messaging, and texts with more collaboration. They are more instantaneous and seek approval and praise from superiors. Authority is respected, however a more comfortable relationship exists with hierarchy. Notably, Generation Y demands the answer to “why” they must follow. They are rewarded by being allowed to provide input and permitted to incorporate technical wizardry into daily routine. This generation balances work and family, but it will choose family and friends over work. Finally, common stereotypes of Generation Y portray them as spoiled, scattered brained, and technology dependent.<sup>15</sup>

Understanding the different personas of each generation enables researchers to compare and contrast specific commonalities. Based on the previous descriptions, Baby Boomers and Generation Y not only have more in common, but also have tendencies that interconnect more accurately. Leadership styles, for example, illustrated that Baby Boomers are collaborative team

players and Generation Y prefers the opportunity to provide input. Generation X on the other hand, prefers autonomy and quick direction. Baby Boomers also question authority and Generation Y wants to know the “why” from authority, a good fit between the generations. Generation X, however, is skeptical of authority and more cynical. Finally, Generation Y’s preference to multitask and Baby Boomer’s efficient and “do what it takes” attitudes work well together. Generation X, in contrast, prefers task-oriented and self-reliance; thus not the collaborative effort Baby Boomer and Generation Y require. Comparing and contrasting the differences between each generation highlights the need for Generation X to change perception and norms for greater success in a multigenerational workforce. Specific to the military hierarchy, Generation X is caught in the middle and faces the greatest challenge in adapting norms to fit Baby Boomer and Generation Y tendencies.

### **Generational Research Studies**

**Perceptions, Studies, Results, and Conclusions.** The leading theories and ideas of the Baby Boomer, X, and Y generations have been explained. Now, what is the relationship of those ideas to the reality of research studies? Each study selected was doctoral research and focused on generational differences in the civilian work force and leadership values between the generations. The commonality between each study was the literary works referenced and stereotypes placed on each generation.

Johann Riescher’s *Management Across Time: A Study of Generational Workforce Groups (Baby Boomer and Generation X) and Leadership* [2009] partially concurred with current U.S. literature concerning the fact that differences indeed exist in work values, work attitudes, work expectations, and preferred leadership style among generational cohorts. His research found that Baby Boomers are workaholics, value participation in the workplace, and want honest

feedback.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, he cites Hall and Zemke that Generation X values “balance in their lives and work to live, not live to work. They need feedback and demand flexibility, request a more informal environment, and break down hierarchical structures in favor of a more horizontal and flexible structure. However, they are comfortable with change.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Generation Y developed through the information age and value diversity while being optimistic and will work and learn.<sup>18</sup>

Riescher’s research suggested differences in work characteristics such as work values, attitudes, and expectations between Baby Boomers and Generation X. However, his study also highlighted many similarities. The research concluded that despite differences, leaders do not need to adjust their leadership style with regard to an employee’s specific generation because Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y all prefer the same style of leader. That is, they prefer a leader who is professional, honest, and receptive to people and ideas.<sup>19</sup>

Cathy Gonzalez’s research in *A Casual Comparative Study of Work Ethics as a Function of Generational Cohorts* [2006] likewise focused on the perceived differences of Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y. She found a difference between the generations pertaining to leisure and wasted time, but found no differences in ideals relating to hard work, delayed gratification, morality/ethical, and the self-reliance dimension.<sup>20</sup> Despite the literary stereotype that Baby Boomers (compared to Generation X and Y) are the most loyal generation and the hardest working, she concluded that Generation X and Generation Y are just as committed. Gonzalez stated that her findings illustrate, “all generations of American society believe that hard work is still gratifying in its own right, and society overall believes not only in the financial rewards of engaging in hard work but also in the personal rewards of accomplishment and pride and a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in work.”<sup>21</sup> From her analysis and conclusions,

Gonzalez suggests that even if generational values differ, each one still agree on results through hard work.

Elisabeth Nesbit, in her research *Generational Affiliation as a Component of Culture: Focus Group Perspectives of Three Generational Cohorts* [2004], discovered that although stereotypical generational trends existed, each generation would not be negatively defined by those perceptions. She concluded that Baby Boomers were “citizens of the world” and took more interest in the “macro-level” throughout the global community. While typical Generation X stereotypes perceived them as angry and cynical loners, the participants were hopeful for change and still exuded a passion within the hierarchy and throughout society. Overall, Generation X was devoted more towards an individual than a group. Finally, Nesbit recognized that Generation Y’s influence from technology made them more exposed to, but not necessarily detached from society. Hence, Generation Y identified themselves more towards groups with whom they would prefer to be associated.<sup>22</sup>

Tanika Hall, in *Leadership Style Predilection of Baby Boomers, Generation X’ers, and Generation Y’ers* [2012], researched published works and concluded that Baby Boomers are optimistic, competitive, and showcase their talents in the workplace for advancement. Generation X was defined in the typical stereotypical fashion as skeptical and “do not flourish in hierarchical environments where they have no access to management and no chance to participate in decision making.”<sup>23</sup> Generation Y, on the other hand, was more collaborative and comfortable in the decision-making process.<sup>24</sup> Hall’s study likewise did not find a difference in the leadership quality each generation preferred: All three generations preferred a transformational style leadership that inspired, stimulated intellectual thinking, centered on individuals, and developed effective leaders.<sup>25</sup>

Richard Conwell's *Retention by the U.S. Air Force Medical Service Corps and Civilian Healthcare Executives: A Generational Study of the Relationship of Ethical Values to Organizational Commitment* [2009] is applicable to generational studies within the Air Force. He stressed that while it was important to recognize that while generational tendencies exist, those committed to the military typically have a different sense of service to society. This becomes an interesting variable to consider when comparing different generational tendencies. Conwell was unable to find a significant difference between the generations within his study pertaining to commitment and loyalty. Differences did exist, however, in other variables such as rank, sex, military or civilian, and age. Significantly, no link could be made highlighting the differences in generational ethical or loyalty stereotype between Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y.<sup>26</sup>

Shanan Farmer further develops the military generational question in *Servant Leadership Attributes in Senior Military Officers: A Quantitative Study Examining Demographic Factors* [2009]. Farmer finds that current “military officers have strong servant leadership qualities: empower and develop others, serving others, open, participatory leadership, inspiring leadership, visionary leadership, and authentic/courageous leadership.”<sup>27</sup> This timeframe coincides with Generation X leaders and would match well to lead Generation Y. The implication raises the question that if a leader has to change leadership style to conform to Generation Y, do military Generation X commanders already possess the inherent traits and ability to do so?

Finally, Linda Dulin explored the *Leadership Preferences of a Generation Y Cohort: A mixed Methods Investigation* [2005]. Her study focused on the leadership traits to which Generation Y best responds. In her dissertation, she maintained that Generation Y developed through the information age and is increasingly high tech; however, despite this it still prefers a

personable relationship within the workforce. Not one that is disconnected from society; rather, Generation Y prefers leaders “who are both mentors and friends.”<sup>28</sup> Dulin also maintained that Generation Y brought their upbringing to the workforce and preferred to be included in decision-making. Thus, Generation Y has “gone from feeling wanted and important in the home to expecting the same in the workplace.”<sup>29</sup> Her research was interesting in that it holds true to current generational stereotypes and offers insight into Generation Y’s preferences. The research, however, contradicts other studies by highlighting a direct link to generational stereotypes and performance in the workforce.

Conducting generational research and investigating subsequent surveys highlight common theories in generational stereotypes that do not necessarily match analytical studies. Additionally, depending on the generation of the author of certain scholarly works and that of the reader, a situation whereby a natural bias in authorship and reader acceptance can occur. Strauss freely admits, “if you are a 13er [Gen X], we can imagine a cautious reception. Here we are, two writers from a generation you don’t especially like [Baby Boomer], laying bare your generation’s problems and affixing a label with an ominous ring.”<sup>30</sup> Comparing scholarly theories of generational studies and stereotypes to surveyed research demonstrates that the latter does not exactly support published works’ overarching conclusions, which classifies and places different generations into different categories. Every research study, however, attempted to prove the literary stereotypes that each generation was perceived to have. Even if there is not a substantial difference between the generations, leadership approaches may still be different due to preconceived notions (perception), values, and the way each generation uses technology. While the preferred leadership style between the generations may not differ, defining characteristics of how a leader communicates and overcoming generational stereotypes become very important.

## **Generational Leadership**

Generational research showed differences between Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y. In the workplace, Strauss suggested, “much of the stress in cross-generational relationships arises when people of different ages expect others to behave in ways their peer personalities won’t allow.”<sup>31</sup> Cross-referencing published generational theories with surveyed research dissertations deduced that not as many differences existed as first hypothesized; however, perceptions between the generations thus become an ensuing challenge. History helped shape each generation and societal norms continue to define them. Despite any differences proven in scholarly works or studies, these analyses concluded that regardless of generation, Baby Boomer, Generation X, or Generation Y, each prefer charismatic leadership willing to receive input and foster a positive work environment. The following expands on several of the common generational tendencies with recommendations for Generation X commanders to better lead Generation Y.

**Military Make-Up...Who (Age) are We Leading Numbers Wise?.** The most current demographic data available comes from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness for fiscal year 2011. Due to the high unemployment rate within the U.S., the armed forces have seen an increase in educational backgrounds and ability test scores for those entering the services. Thus, fiscal year accessions are the highest quality since 1973 when the All-Volunteer Force began.<sup>32</sup> Hence, transformational leadership that sparks intellectual curiosity becomes more significant, and beneficial for today’s armed forces. Furthermore, the active duty component endstrength of 1.41 million was younger and had a higher rate of marriage when compared to the civilian population.<sup>33</sup> The average age for each service is approximately 30 years old, with the Marine Corps being the only exception at 25 years. These

statistics, coupled with the fact that Generation X and Y place increasing value on family, becomes a significant factor in leadership. Furthermore, Baby Boomers now compose less than one percent of the military population, Generation X over 30%, and Generation Y over 60% (see Appendix B for a composite breakdown of the U.S. armed forces).<sup>34</sup> Thus, the majority of armed service members fall into Generation Y and it is advantageous to understand their stereotypes and tendencies. In summary, the military in 2013 is recruiting smarter young men and women with Generation Y dominating the service in numbers.

**Embracing Facebook/Twitter/Smart Phones.** Generation Y is defined by growing up in the information age. Their lives have been consumed with the ability to integrate technology into everyday uses. Generation X caught the front end of technological development before entering the workforce, and they, as well as the Baby Boomers, have learned to adapt and live with technology after adulthood. Generation Y, on the other hand, is extremely comfortable with technology and have never known any different environment. While leading Generation Y, Generation X commanders must understand the value placed on technology, especially communications, for Generation Y. Embracing new forms of communication through facebook, twitter, and smart phones thus increases a commander's ability to reach subordinates on a level that is both recognizable and comfortable.

**Communicate on Generation Y's Level.** Generation X commanders must learn to effectively use Generation Y tools professionally. Air Force units, for example, have recently populated public access facebook pages with much success. Wing commanders (equivalent to Marine aircraft groups and regiments), who have ensured information is current and valuable to Generation Y, have discovered just how wired Generation Y is. Information from advertising base events to required actions during base emergencies showcase the value of using these tools

to communicate with Generation Y and their families. Modern forms of communication, through technology, are what Generation Y best responds to. Historically, Air Force wing commanders insist on broadcasting a “Commander’s Channel” over cable on their installations. The cable channel met a requirement to reach out to the base community; however, information was not immediate and typically outdated because the maintenance of current and relevant information was cumbersome. Despite a low rate of return on investment, commanders had become tied to the need of using this tool. This was overcome by the combination of Generation Y’s wired tendencies and the ability to communicate via new technologies on their level. Thus, Generation X commanders learned the value of using a different medium for timely communication, enhanced mission accomplishment, and personal concern.

**How Generation Y Socializes (Physical vs Cyber).** Generation X commanders must also understand how differently Generation Y socializes. Baby Boomer, Generation X, and previous generations socialized on a purely physical, or personal contact, level. The ability to teleconference was limited and used only in the workplace for meetings. Today, personal computers with cameras and smart phone capabilities easily and affordably tie together Generation Y, hence not always in a physical sense. Moreover, Generation Y exists in cyberspace to communicate ideas and showcase their identity online. Generational research highlighted that Generation Y feels more a part of a community and readily identifies to “tribes” that can easily cross national boundaries.<sup>35</sup> The implication is clear: Their identity online is just as important, if not more significant, than their physical presence. Additionally, Generation Y is more comfortable online compared to physical social interaction. Thus, Generation X commanders must become comfortable with Generation Y communicating via Generation Y resources, namely through the cyber domain (i.e., e-mail, text, facebook, and twitter). While

leadership by physical presence is still important, Generation X commanders can adapt and balance their messaging through both the physical and cyber realms. Such a multi-access approach not only increases communication, but also makes Generation Y more comfortable with communicating to their superiors.

**Visiting Homes to Visiting Facebook/Web Pages.** Similar to communicating online, Generation X commanders must shift from visiting only homes to visiting personal facebook and web pages. Generation Y's ability to socialize through cyberspace offers an opportunity for commanders to check the health and welfare of those they command. On duty performance is one aspect of being in the military, but off duty life is likewise important in maintaining military tradition and values. Information that Generation Y will not share in an office setting is readily available on their public web pages. Not to be confused with invasion of privacy, commanders can acquire a glimpse into Generation Y's off duty norms and practices through Generation Y's personal media. A case in point of searching facebook pages in December of 2011, for example, found a picture of Airmen surrounding a coffin, the same type used to transport fallen heroes, with one Airman inside wearing chains and a noose.<sup>36</sup> A clear example of how Generation Y's use of online social media can have ripple effects throughout the military and society. Generation X commanders, through scanning public web pages, can discover inappropriate behavior that must be addressed, or conversely, come across great accomplishments their subordinates post. Baby Boomer and Generation X may find this tactic as an invasion of privacy, but, Generation Y, which has grown up with this technology, better understands the uses and power of social media.

**Informal E-mail.** Generation X commanders must also become comfortable with the way in which Generation Y communicates. E-mail has transformed society from writing letters and

telephone conversations to quickly sending e-mails or texts and expecting quick responses. Baby Boomer and Generation X have embraced e-mail technology, but with the same formalities of writing letters and respectful conversations over the phone. Generation Y, however, uses the technology differently in that it is quick and less formal. Generation X commanders must recognize how e-mail and texts evolved into a less formal way of communication, hence less formal tone. Although certain protocols must still be maintained and taught, Generation X commanders ought to understand how Generation Y tends to be less formal and differential over digital conversation; a key here is that no disrespect is intended. Additionally, Generation X commanders can teach Generation Y the proper use of the medium when situations dictate, for example, when conversing with superiors or succinctly conveying operational information. While certain informal tones should not be tolerated, some leniency must exist in casual digital conversations or Generation X commanders may inhibit communication altogether from Generation Y.

**Public Access Wi-Fi?.** Baby Boomer and Generation X leadership is responsible for the conduct of subordinates on duty. In the past, the lengthy use of the Internet was not tolerated in the work environment. Today, Generation Y sees connectivity as productivity. If a unit does not offer public access to the Internet, Generation Y adapts and uses personal technology to stay connected. Generation Y is able to quickly converse via the cyber medium and uses its tendency of group participation through the Internet. Generation Y will use all the technical capabilities at its disposal to accomplish work. Both personal and work contacts, for example, are housed on their own devices and they will choose the less restrictive medium to accomplish their assigned tasks. Generation X must not view Generation Y on their phone as merely a personal transaction. Frequently observed in an office setting, Generation Y take to their personal device

over government phones to converse due to ease of use and available information on the device itself. Their ability to adapt in the information age has surpassed standard government technology and will be used when and if possible. Generation X commanders must understand the work preferences of Generation Y and balance restrictive use of connectivity with productivity. Furthermore, Generation X commanders must teach the proper use of technology in a secure setting. Simply restricting access in an office environment does not prohibit Generation Y from stepping outside on a smart phone or going home to link in with public information systems. The key is to not ignore Generation Y's online tendencies, but to educate the proper dissemination of certain sensitive information.

**How and When Generation Y Works (Wired 24/7).** Generation Y is wired 24/7 and are productive even when off duty. The speed at which Generation Y prefers to multitask is impressive. Generation X is task oriented and should recognize that Generation Y is equally so, but works differently. Wired 24/7 with the ability to multitask, traditional work hours are blurred. However, conceptual work ethics between each generation have been found to be very similar although the generations just choose to do it differently. Generation X values the family and is more comfortable with a defined line between work and home. Generation Y, however, is comfortable with multi-tasking and the speed in which they can maneuver makes their generation more adaptable to carrying work from the office to home. Essentially, the mere physical presence in an office does not equate to productivity and Generation Y is comfortable multitasking outside the office while engaged in multiple activities.

**Bridging the Generational Gap.** Finally, Baby Boomers now make up less than 1% of the population within the U.S. military and ranks. Baby Boomers hold the top military senior positions and those who have retired still indirectly have great influence in the armed forces

today. Generation X, however, has transitioned into the majority of leadership positions as commanders and senior enlisted. Leading Generation Y, and tailoring to generational tendencies, is a necessity for Generation X commanders. Additionally, and just as important, Generation X provides the link to close the generation gap to ensure loyalty to senior leaders in the Baby Boomer generation while leading, guiding, and mentoring Generation Y subordinates.

Generation X commanders' ability to recognize core differences in behavior is the key to successfully bridging the generational gap. Baby Boomers and Generation Y have more in common than Generation X, however differences still do exist. The key for commanders is translating those differing values from each generation. To do this, Generation X commanders must first create an environment of respect between both generations. Strauss recognizes "for centuries, 'idealist' generations have invariably come of age mounting a highly symbolic attack against their aging 'Civic' elders-and have later entered midlife engaging in a bitter conflict with their 'Reactive' next-juniors."<sup>37</sup> To avoid this in the armed forces, Generation X must lead by example and adaptability, thus showing Generation Y that Baby Boomers in the work place demand respect. As it is Generation Y's tendency to want to know the "why", Generation X commanders must also foster a positive relationship and highlight the advantages of using Baby Boomer's experience in the workforce.

Conversely, Generation X commanders must not belittle Generation Y's experience, especially in front of the Baby Boomer generation. Generation Y must know that their inputs are valued and Generation X can better translate those ideas to the Baby Boomer generation, senior commanders, and leaders. The use of technology is the perfect example. Generation Y creates efficiencies through multitasking and the use of existing new technology. It is important to correctly translate these practices to the Baby Boomer generation who value efficiency and will

do what it takes to get the job done. To avoid misunderstanding in the use of technology, Baby Boomer commanders must comprehend that this is not a lazy approach to work. The use of social media is not just for Generation Y even though they adapt it the best, especially its new evolutions. Instead of simply highlighting the efficiencies through technology, Generation X must show Baby Boomers in the workforce exactly how that technology can be used to create enhanced productivity and hence mission accomplishment. Ultimately, translating social norms between generations enable Generation X to command authority in the workplace and bridge the gap between Baby Boomers and Generation Y.

Generation X commanders who understand generational tendencies are better prepared for leadership positions. Recognizing Generation Y's need for technology, ability to multitask, and a cooperative style of work ethic lends itself to a leadership style that incorporates ideas and a willingness to see new ways of accomplishing the mission. The high operational tempo of the armed forces and pressing reductions in force naturally creates a shift in how the military must accomplish its assigned and implied missions. Adjusting Generation X stereotypes to fit the evolving Generation Y workforce is paramount in leading the new generation of military men and women.

### **Conclusion**

*Commanding Generation Y* assessed generational differences through the lens of academic studies and military leadership. Research into scholarly works compared and contrasted Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y norms and stereotypes. Seven research dissertations were then explored to validate or contradict leading theories in generational studies, to include stereotypes. Finally, those theories were applied to highlight how Generation X commanders can better lead and command in a three generational military

force. An initial hypothesis that Generation X commanders would have to drastically change leadership and command practices while commanding Generation Y were not true. Rather, although each generation may have different norms, basic values remained relatively the same, at least within a military environment.

Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y preferred the same transformational leadership style, maintained strong work ethics, and possessed loyalty to mission accomplishment. The differences, however, existed in the small nuances between each generation. Societies continue to evolve as history unfolds. For Generation Y, this was especially true of its use of evolving technology and the way they socialize and communicate. Generation X commanders can overcome these nuances by incorporating Generation Y technology and actively leading individually and personally. Understanding Generation Y tendencies and stereotypes, without mirror imaging Generation X's own tendencies and stereotypes, creates a positive work environment with increased productivity despite differing generations. *Commanding Generation Y* illustrated how Generation X can understand and adapt to the changing environment in which Generation Y operates and that they, X'ers, are the vital cohort to bridge the gap between Baby Boomers and Generation Y.

## APPENDIX A

### GENERATIONAL TABLE MATRIX

Baby Boomers - A group of individuals born between 1946 and 1963 (67-50 years old)

Generation X - A group of individuals born between 1965 and 1980 (48-33 years old)

Generation Y - A group of individuals born between 1981 and 2000 (32-13 years old)

	<b>Veteran/Traditionalist</b>	<b>Baby Boomer</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Generation Y</b>
<b>Dominant Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Benevolence</li> <li>- Loyalty</li> <li>- Conformity</li> <li>- Custom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tolerance</li> <li>- Power/authority</li> <li>- Achievement</li> <li>- Stimulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stimulation</li> <li>- Self-direction</li> <li>- Achievement</li> <li>- Hedonism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stimulation</li> <li>- Self-Direction</li> <li>- Hedonism</li> </ul>
<b>Stereotypes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Old-fashioned/rigid</li> <li>- Autocratic</li> <li>- Do not want to learn new ways of working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workaholic</li> <li>- Political</li> <li>- Self-Centered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cynical</li> <li>- Lazy</li> <li>- Selfish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spoiled</li> <li>- Technology-dependent</li> <li>- Scatterbrained</li> </ul>
<b>Work Ethic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disciplined</li> <li>- Duty before play</li> <li>- Adhere to the rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efficient</li> <li>- Logical</li> <li>- Do what it takes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Task-oriented</li> <li>- Self-reliant</li> <li>- Independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multitasking</li> <li>- Group-oriented</li> <li>- Explain why</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal</li> <li>- Written</li> <li>- Chain-of-Command</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face time</li> <li>- One-on-One</li> <li>- In-person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct</li> <li>- As needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail/voice-mail</li> <li>- Instant Messaging</li> <li>- Lots of cc's</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoid conflict</li> <li>- No news is good news</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Show me the money"</li> <li>- Promotion&gt;Title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct—"Tell me how I am doing"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instantaneous</li> <li>- Seek approval/praise</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Command and control</li> <li>- Take charge</li> <li>- Authoritative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborative</li> <li>- Team player</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entrepreneurial</li> <li>- Participative</li> <li>- Wants to know why</li> </ul>	N/A <sup>63</sup>
<b>Authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow authority figure</li> <li>- Hierarchical</li> <li>- Chain-of-command</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Question authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skeptical of authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lines are blurred</li> <li>- Why must I follow?</li> </ul>
<b>Family and Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family and work are always separate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work takes priority over all else</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work-Life balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work-Life balance</li> <li>- If must choose, will select family and friends</li> </ul>
<b>Rewards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appreciate recognition for a job well done</li> <li>- Opportunity to mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appreciate promotion, title, money</li> <li>- Opportunity to build consensus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appreciate autonomy and flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appreciate the opportunity to provide input</li> <li>- Technical wiz</li> </ul>

Crumpacker, Martha, and Jill Crumpacker, *Succession Planning and Generational Stereotypes: Should HR Consider Age-Based Values and Attitudes a Relevant Factor or a Passing Fad?*, Public Personnel Management, Vol 36 No. 4, 2007.

## APPENDIX B

### U.S. ARMED FORCES COMPOSITE BREAKDOWN

#### **ASSIGNED STRENGTH OF ACTIVE DUTY FORCE**

Service	Enlisted	Officers	Total	Percentage
Army	452,064	87,610	539,675	37.8%
Navy	275,296	51,388	326,684	22.9%
Marine Corps	178,213	20,202	198,415	13.9%
Air Force	258,095	64,805	322,900	22.6%
Coast Guard	33,228	8,134	41,362	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,196,897</b>	<b>232,139</b>	<b>1,429,036</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **MARITAL PROFILE OF ACTIVE DUTY FORCE**

Service	Enlisted % Married	Officer % Married
Army	53.7 %	69.9 %
Navy	51.3 %	69.3 %
Marine Corps	42.6 %	67.8 %
Air Force	57.3 %	71.7 %
Coast Guard	54.8 %	73.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.3 %</b>	<b>70.2 %</b>

#### **EDUCATION PROFILE OF ACTIVE DUTY FORCE**

Service	% w/ HSD & Above	% w/ BA/BS & Above
Army	84.9 %	85.8 %
Navy	94.6 %	89 %
Marine Corps	96.1 %	88.8 %
Air Force	99.9 %	99 %
Coast Guard	99.5 %	53.4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>92.5 %</b>	<b>89.3 %</b>

#### **AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVE DUTY FORCE**

Service	18-21	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-59	Average Age
Army	18.3 %	48 %	25.6 %	7.9 %	0.7 %	29
Navy	18.6 %	46 %	26.3 %	8.3 %	0.8 %	29
Marine Corps	36.9 %	46 %	14 %	3.1 %	0.2 %	25
Air Force	14.4 %	46 %	28.3 %	10 %	0.6 %	30
Coast Guard	12.2 %	48 %	27 %	12 %	1 %	30

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## **Endnotes**

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Atkinson published an article defining Generation Y stereotypes. He goes on to further discuss reasons as to why and how those stereotypes developed. His work added depth to generational research discussing more than a list of tendencies and norms.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*, Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Carl von Clausewitz was one of the premier military strategists of his time. His philosophy about war delves into a trinity theory and that war is simply physical violence. As related to generational study, his work provided a natural comparison that while characteristics of leadership or generations may change, the nature remains constant.

Conwell, Richard J. "Retention by the U.S. Air Force Medical Service Corps and Civilian Healthcare Executives: A Generational Study of the Relationship of Ethical Values to Organizational Commitment." Doctorate Degree, Nova Southeastern University, 2009.  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Conwell's research found that there was a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and ethical values; however, this study did not find a significant relationship between organizational commitment and generation types. The study was valuable because the test group was U.S. Airmen vice a civilian test group, which added validity that generational stereotypes may be different within the armed services as opposed to U.S. society at large.

Crumpacker, Martha, and Jill Crumpacker, *Succession Planning and Generational Stereotypes: Should HR Consider Age-Based Values and Attitudes a Relevant Factor or a Passing Fad?*, Public Personnel Management, Vol 36 No. 4, 2007.

Martha and Jill Crumpacker explored generational perspectives of age-based values, attitudes, and norms within a multigenerational workforce. They highlight that values and attitudes of workers directly relate to organizational norms and culture. Their summary of generational

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norms and stereotypes were an easy to follow and succinct description of each generation from which further analysis could develop.

Demographics of Active Duty U.S. Military. Statistic Brain, Defense Manpower Data Center, 2011, <http://www.statisticbrain.com/demographics-of-active-duty-u-s-military/>.

Statistic Brain offered a succinct charted demographic of the Active Duty US. Military taken from the Defense Manpower Data Center in 2011. The statistics were used to show the age demographics within the military compared to the rank hierarchy. Statistics used linked age and rank to specific generations within the U.S. armed forces.

Dulin, Linda. "Leadership Preferences of a Generation Y Cohort: A mixed Methods Investigation." Doctorate Degree, University of North Texas, 2005.  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Linda Dulin's research summarized generational norms and tendencies focusing on Generation Y's preference for leadership. She emphasized the differences between each generation and how older generations will have to adapt to lead Generation Y. Generational stereotypes held true throughout surveyed results and valuable to establish a common link across all generations.

Farmer, Shanan William. "Servant Leadership Attributes in Senior Military Officers: A Quantitative Study Examining Demographic Factors." Northcentral University, 2009.  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Shanan Farmer explored the leadership attributes inherent in U.S. senior military officers. The servant leadership style matches well with leading Generation Y. Her research helped develop the question that even if civilian organization leaders have to change their leadership style to conform to Generation Y, are military Generation X commanders exempt if they already have those inherent traits?

Francis, Enjoli. "Inappropriate and Disrespectful: Air Force Investigates Casket Image." *abcnews.go.com*, December 16, 2011,  
<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2011/12/inappropriate-and-disrespectful-air-force-investigates-casket-image/>.

Enjoli Francis' news article was about an incident concerning an inappropriate picture taken by U.S. Airmen. The event highlighted how Generation Y uses social media to post their personalities and that leaders can surf personnel public web pages to get a sense of off duty conduct.

Gonzalez, Cathy Jane Asaro. "A Casual Comparative Study of Work Ethic as a Function of Generational Cohorts." Doctorate Degree, University of Phoenix, 2006.  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Cathy Gonzalez studied work ethic across three generations. She hypothesized there would be a difference based on published stereotypes of each generation. Her research, however, found no

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difference in work ethic values placed by each generation. Her study was valuable in highlighting that although stereotypes exist, certain values across generations can remain the same.

Hall, Tanika LaToya. "Leadership Style Predilection of Baby Boomers, Generation X'ers, and Generation Y'ers". Doctorate Degree, University of Maryland University College, 2012. <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Tanika Hall conducted a study that focused on leadership styles between Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y. She predicted, based on published stereotypes, that diversity in preferred leadership would exist. Her study, however, showed that each generation preferred the same style of transformational leadership. Her work was vital in understanding that while generations may prefer different leadership styles, the three generations polled preferred the same.

Lyon, Legg, and Toulson. *Generational Cohorts*, International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations, 5(1), 2005, 89-98.

Lyon, Legg, and Toulson's article explored the concept of generational cohorts and how an organization must adapt through policies and practices to maintain a competitive advantage. The article was a valuable look into managing different generations and how to best utilize strengths from each generation.

Nesbit, Elisabeth Anne. "Generational Affiliation as a Component of Culture: Focus Group Perspectives of Three Generational Cohorts." Doctorate Degree, University of Northern Iowa, 2004. <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Elisabeth Nesbit offered a unique look into generational cohorts and how they act. Her research was well developed and comprehensive using multiple resources from published authors who are experts in the generational field of study.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness. *Population Representation in the Military Services: Fiscal Year 2011 Summary Report*, 2012.

This summary report was the most current data available for the U.S. armed forces that broke down various demographics within the U.S. armed forces. Data was used to highlight the composition of U.S. military forces today.

Riescher, Johann G. "Management Across Time: A Study of Generational Workforce Groups (Baby Boomer and Generation X) And Leadership." Doctorate Degree, Capella University, 2009. <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usmcu/>.

Johann Riescher conducted a thorough study across Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y. The study highlighted published research to show generational differences, however, the study proved that many differences did not exist between the different generations. While some differences were discovered, ultimately the research showed that leaders do not need

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to adjust their leadership style with regard to employee generation.

Smith, S. *Decoding generational differences: Fact, fiction ... or should we just get back to work?*. www.deloitte.com: Deloitte Development LLC, 2008.

Smith, a Baby Boomer himself, wrote about the differences between Baby Boomers and Generation Y, and why we should care. The article addresses issues that can arise in an organization due to generational differences and how certain mindsets need to change to capitalize on generational advantages. The article was beneficial in addressing generational differences in the workforce and the importance in recognizing those differences.

Strauss, W., & Howe, N. *Generations: The history of America's future, 1584 to 2069*. New York: Morrow, 1991.

Strauss and Howe, Baby Boomers themselves, are recognized authors in the field of generational study. Their comprehensive work explains how generations develop into cohorts and further defines generational norms and stereotypes. Their theory maintains that based on specific generational tendencies, one can predict certain behaviors and decisions made by generational cohorts. Their work was invaluable to overall research and analysis in generational studies.

ValueOptions. *Meet the multigenerational workforce*. Retrieved December 21, 2012, from  
[http://www.valueoptions.com/spotlight\\_YIW/workforce.htm](http://www.valueoptions.com/spotlight_YIW/workforce.htm)

ValueOptions is an independent behavioral health and wellness company that consults for large corporations, federal, state, and local governments, and universities and academic institutions. Their research focuses on the generational workforce and how to best leverage strengths of each generation. Their research was valuable in realizing practical application with respect to generational norms.